DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 182 FL 022 964

AUTHOR Bromidge, Wendy; Burch, James
TITLE Learning To Communicate. In Focus: The Languages Classroom. Teacher's Notes.
INSTITUTION Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, London (England).
REPORT NO ISBN-1-874016-14-3
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 31p.
AVAILABLE FROM Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, 20 Dedfordbury, Covent Garden, London WC2N 4LB, England, United Kingdom.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Communication; Classroom Techniques; Foreign Countries; French; German; *Language of Instruction; *Language Role; Secondary Education; Second Language Instruction; *Second Languages; Videotape Recordings

ABSTRACT

The teacher's guide is designed to accompany video recordings (not included here) of second language classroom interactions, and used to enhance language teachers' understanding of the dynamics of target language use in the classroom. An introductory section offers arguments in support of the use of the target language and offering specific suggestions for techniques of target language use. The four subsequent parts of the guide correspond to video sequences of classroom interaction. The first is a recording of a British secondary school second-year French class in which some students have special needs. Topics discussed in the guide include a warm-up activity, student-to-student language use, topic, introduction of new vocabulary or structures, and student-to-teacher language use. The second sequence is a mixed-ability secondary school group in first-year German; classroom behaviors and interactions are noted. The third recording is of third-year German students in a secondary school class; again, notes are offered on classroom activities. The fourth sequence concerns two classes, those in the first and second sequences; classroom interactions are described briefly. After a brief concluding section, reproducible visual aids for French and German instruction are presented. (MSE)

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Languages for Life

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IN FOCUS

The languages classroom

Learning to communicate

By Wendy Bromidge
and James Burch

Teachers' notes

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First published 1993

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ISBN 1 874016 14 3

Published by the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, 20 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4LB

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January 1993

Dear Colleagues,

As the challenges of the National Curriculum become reality, many of us are being forced to assess anew our classroom practice. The use of the target language in the classroom is perhaps one of the most burning issues, and potentially one of the most daunting. We hope that the video and these notes will at least provide a starting point for discussion and for the formation of departmental policies.

Our aims are quite simply to show firstly that it is possible to use the target language almost exclusively, and secondly that this can be a motivating factor for students and teachers alike. No attempt has been made to explain in detail the steps which were taken in order to reach this point. It is hoped that future publications will do so.

On a very practical note, each class shown here was filmed once only during the Summer Term of 1992 for a 50-minute period. Everything was sacrificed in favour of authenticity. Nothing was reshot, only the inbuilt microphones on the video cameras were used, and the cameramen remained static throughout the lesson. This means that despite conscientious editing it is not always possible to see or hear as well as one would like, particularly when students use the target language spontaneously amongst themselves. The *Teachers' notes* attempt to bridge this gap by briefly summarising each activity and drawing attention to instances where students use the target language creatively (marked ***). We suggest therefore that the notes are used in conjunction with the video.

In no way is the methodology used here being held up as the 'right' model or as a panacea. However, we do hope that it will stimulate debate and provide ideas. Language teachers everywhere survive on techniques 'stolen' or adapted from those observed elsewhere and we hope you will be able to take at least some of the ideas here and adapt them to your own teaching style and personality.

Finally, we would be very grateful for any feedback you may have on the video itself or on the notes.

With best wishes,

Wendy Bromidge. James Burch.

Wendy Bromidge James Burch

Introduction: The use of the target language

An extract from the Lord Grey School *Modern languages faculty handbook*, reproduced with the kind permission of Jonathan Day, Head of Faculty:

> *'We feel that the use of the target language both in and out of the classroom as the principal means of communication is integral to the Faculty ethos. We therefore aim to use the target language all the time during lessons, when we see students and colleagues in the Language Faculty and elsewhere around the school. This is for several reasons:*
>
> - *Above all else, we do not wish to undermine our own subject. As language teachers, we know the value of being able to speak foreign languages and have first-hand experience of using them abroad. From the start it is important that we make our students aware of the fact that the target language is a legitimate means of communication which actually works.*
>
> - *We feel that using the target language has enormous 'knock-on' effects in terms of students' listening comprehension skills and vocabulary extension. If every lesson is run totally in the foreign language, every lesson is a 40-50 minute listening exercise. This increases students' passive and active vocabularies and encourages accurate pronunciation and a feeling for language patterns.*
>
> - *We like to create an environment in our classrooms which comes as close as possible to being abroad, and which contrasts clearly with lessons students are coming from and going to. The target language is thus used to communicate in reality during lessons rather than as an exercise.*
>
> - *By using the target language we are able to prepare the students in advance for language that crops up later in the syllabus. The fact that they are, for example, 'learning' the past tense in the early weeks of language lessons is not important if they actually need that language in order to explain why they are late for a lesson. Needing language is a*

more important criterion for learning it than the fact that it is the next item on the syllabus.

- *We feel that using the target language has benefits in terms of discipline. Occasionally it can relieve tension in a potentially difficult situation, which may be aggravated by the use of English.*

Using the target language all of the time in lessons presents several challenges and we have developed various strategies in order to overcome these:

- *We check comprehension regularly, often in the target language or through some kind of physical response by the class. Occasionally we ask individual students to interpret for the rest of the class. This enables students to confirm that they have understood, or to understand if they have not already done so, without undermining the teacher's use of the foreign language. However, we do try to use this technique in moderation since it can interrupt the flow of a lesson and lead students into a false sense of security.*

- *We back up our language constantly with mimes, gestures and facial expressions in order to give students as many clues as possible. Many students find simply hearing and understanding, even in English, very difficult, but have considerably more success if they can see and hear the message simultaneously.*

- *We use clear, consistent classroom language, especially in the early stages of language learning. Later on we feel that students should become aware of different forms and registers in language, but initially it is important that teachers decide which particular phrases they will use and that these are used with total consistency.*

- *Wherever possible we use cognates in order to give students the best possible opportunity of making intelligent guesses as to meaning.*

- *Instructions for new activities are planned carefully in advance and language chosen so that use of cognates and sentence markers give students the best possible chance of understanding.*

- *Where possible, new activities are demonstrated in order to avoid lengthy explanations.*

- *We try to make the 'lesson' part of the language lessons almost incidental. We feel that any activity we run should be equally meaningful and fun in English. We find that students are not intimidated by hearing the foreign language all the time if it occurs in a non-threatening atmosphere.*

- *We try to exploit all natural events to our own advantage, i.e. sneezing, falling off chairs, late arrivals to class, absences, illness, discussions about lack of books/homework, etc.*

- *We 'use' visitors to the classroom whether or not they are linguists. Speakers of the target language are expected to participate fully in the 'game', to use only the target language and to join in whatever activity the class is engaged in. If visitors do not speak the language, for example the Headteacher, school nurse, students learning another language or other members of staff, we try to address them in the target language and get students to act as interpreters. This has two benefits: students are highly motivated by showing visitors what they can do, and (some) adults are reluctant to interrupt our lessons unless it is urgent!*

In conclusion, we agree with Krashen that students understand, use, enjoy and are successful working in the target language if:

- *there is no compulsion to speak;*
- *their environment is stress free;*
- *the input is comprehensible.'*

Part one: Year 9 French

The class

The year 9 students seen here are at the end of their second year of learning French and are of average to below-average ability. There are 32 students in the class, two of whom have statements of Special Educational Needs and many of whom have considerable difficulties with reading and writing. A support teacher assists with the class once a week and was present for this particular lesson.

Warm-up activity

This is a very simple 'Stand up if ...' activity and is used here for revision of personal information. Students simply listen and stand up if the teacher's sentence applies to them.

Revision of pupil-pupil language OHTs 1-3

In this sequence, students play a game involving the use of classroom language already familiar to them which it is hoped they will then go on to use during the rest of the lesson. The language to be practised is on an overhead transparency, enlarged copies of which are displayed on the walls of the classroom.

The activity itself involves one student controlling his/her partner. One student says the alphabet (or counts or repeats any language currently being worked on) and the partner controls the manner in which they speak, i.e. loudly, softly, quickly, slowly, standing up, sitting down.

> Two students at the back, Craig and Jeannette, start to argue when Craig refuses to say the alphabet. Mileage is made out of this: a transparency with the language of arguments is shown and the activity continues on this new tack with all pairs arguing.

Topic revision OHTs 4-5

A. In order to revise a basic hotel dialogue introduced several months ago, students here play a 'dumb guest' game. The teacher demonstrates first, with the whole

class as her partner, and students then continue in pairs. The guest checking in at the hotel has no voice and so mimes his/her side of the dialogue. The receptionist translates the mimes into words and also completes his/her side of the dialogue.

B. Students here recap language introduced two days previously to do with illnesses, the current topic on the departmental syllabus which is to be extended in this lesson. They saw the first few pictures for the first time in the previous lesson and are now encouraged to reproduce the language before the whole picture is revealed. It is clear that students have forgotten '*Je suis enrhume*' and this is given more practice in pairs, using a sneeze as an action.

*** Whilst trying to recall the phrase '*Je suis enrhume*' which the class has forgotten, individual students try '*A tes souhaits!*' (Bless you!), '*Je suis un mouchoir*' (I am a handkerchief) then corrected to '*Il faut un mouchoir*' (You need a handkerchief).

*** It should perhaps be admitted that the impressive '*J'ai besoin d'un mouchoir*' (I need a handkerchief) comes not from a student, but from the support teacher, whose 'O' level French serves her well!

Introducing new language **OHT 5**

'*J'ai de la fièvre*' is the first totally new piece of language introduced in this lesson. New phrases are introduced and practised in the following sequence:

★ a fraction of the picture is revealed;
★ the teacher explains the new language without actually giving it;
★ once students have guessed, they ask for the new language '*C'est quoi* I've got a temperature *en français?*' or they experiment to see if they can work it out from the language they already know;
★ the teacher gives the new language;
★ a mime is attached to the phrase;
★ the whole class repeats, methods of repetition varying from the straight repeat with action of '*J'ai de la fièvre*' to the game with '*J'ai la diarrhee*' where partner A cannot say the phrase until partner B lowers his/her hand and says '*Vas-y!*'.

*** Jeannette calls out '*Excusez-moi!*' (Excuse me) because the teacher is standing in her way. She then guesses '*Trop cher*' (Too expensive) because she has misinterpreted the thermometer reading for a price tag. Other students then try '*Trop chaud*' (Too hot) and '*chaud*' (hot).

*** Having understood the picture representing '*J'ai la diarrhee*', Jeannette realises she does not yet have the French to say this and says '*Je ne sais pas en français*' (I don't know in French).

*** Adam, on the front row, points at the final picture of someone vomiting and says '*C'est drôle*' (That's funny).

Lesson administration

In this final section of the lesson homework is checked. A student who has forgotten his book and explains why in English is urged to do so in French by another student. Students are then encouraged to check whether or not their partner has completed homework and to comment on this.

*** Jeannette helps Darren, who is struggling to explain why he has no book, by prompting '*J'ai oublié mon cahier*' (I've forgotten my book).

*** The teacher demonstrates the homework-checking exercise with Adam. When asked where his homework is he replies '*Dans mon cahier*' (In my book).

*** The teacher has a word with Kieran, whose (closed!) book we see at close quarters. He has no homework and his excuse, barely audible, is '*Je n'ai pas de couleurs!*' (I haven't got any colours).

Part two: Exploiting the unexpected

The class

The year 8 students seen in this section are a mixed-ability group of 32 students at the end of their first year learning German.

1. Donna arrives late because she has been to a music lesson. From a very early stage students have been expected to explain in German why they are late (**OHT 6**). The class asks her why she is so late, she gives a reason and they then vote on whether or not they think this is an acceptable excuse.

2. Simon, who is learning French, brings a message from another teacher. The class interprets so that messages are conveyed.

*** Just before Simon comes in, a short exchange occurs where the sound is very muffled. Suzanna knows what the next picture is before the teacher has even started talking about it. The class asks her how she knows what it is. Her reply is '*Auf Montag ich sehe das*' (I see it on Monday - wrong tense and wrong word for 'on' but her message was clear).

*** Having asked Simon why he is here, Stuart, on the immediate right of the teacher says '*Ein Brief*' (A letter).

3. The teacher makes a mistake, expecting students to follow something on the overhead projector when they cannot actually see because the projector head is closed. This mistake is exploited by getting students to shout 'up' or 'down' to get the picture in the right place.

*** Lisa, on the front row says '*Entschuldigung. Ich kann nicht sehen*' (Excuse me. I can't see).

*** After the picture has gone up and down several times a student at the back logically suggests '*In die Mitte*' (In the middle) and another tries '*Ziemlich unten*' (Quite down).

4. In this sequence students are playing an alphabet game (**OHT 7**) which is in effect a spelling test in disguise. Each pair has two alphabets on cards (two A cards, two B cards, etc) which they place face upwards on the table. The teacher calls out a word and they have to build it correctly using the cards.

With this particular class the game has been played several times and has now become more sophisticated, so that all discussion between pairs is in German and each student monitors his/her partner in case English is spoken. At the beginning of the game the class agrees on a price list, a set of forfeits from which the students can choose if their partner speaks English. As well as playing the game, students are then responsible for the enforcement of the forfeits.

Just as this particular game finishes, James shouts out 'You cheat!' and the whole class 'disciplines' him. It should be pointed out that such public completion of forfeits is used sparingly. James is a student who easily copes with and enjoys such attention!

*** Just before James calls 'You cheat!' several students can be heard shouting *'Fertig!'* (Finished) and then another James cheers *'Ha, ha! Ich habe gewonnen!'* (I've won!).

5. Just as this section begins, a transparency which students saw in the previous lesson has been placed on the projector. Chris, at the back, says *'Oh, Nein!'* just loud enough for everyone to hear, and certainly loud enough that the teacher cannot let it go. Rather than make an unpleasant scene out of it, the class is encouraged to tell Chris that the work is interesting, and a light-hearted argument ensues, during which several students naturally join Chris's side!

6. It is lunchtime and the class upstairs is packing up. Their chairs can be heard scraping on the floor. The teacher stresses that the German lesson is however not over - there is one minute to go. The bell is then heard and watches are bleeping all around the room - the students want to go, and plead with the teacher. At least they plead in German ... ! The teacher wins and the final one-minute activity (**OHT 8**) involves students asking their partners what they thought of today's lesson.

*** Just as the picture appears the students have been told to pack away their cards and leave them on the table. Several students can be heard telling their partners *'Nicht anfassen!'* (Don't touch it - they refer to the bag containing the cards!).

Part three: What language will they need?

The class

The 34 students in this class are in year 10 and have been learning German for three years. It is a group of average to above-average ability. On this occasion the teacher is also assisted by the German Language Assistant.

In recent weeks the students have been doing a variety of projects to try to extend their creative use of the language in a less structured format than that to which they are accustomed. The teacher has aimed specifically at improving their use of German within lessons, particularly during exchanges with peers. The aim of this lesson is to set up a week-long assignment which will involve working in pairs to produce a magazine on a topic of their choice.

1. The teacher recaps work covered recently and stresses that during this assignment students should make a real effort to improve again on their use of German in class, which had slipped slightly during the previous week.

2. We see one of a series of games played in order to practise the language students will need throughout the assignment (Can you give me a pen/ruler/pencil? Can I use the computer/work with the assistant/fetch a dictionary? etc **OHT 9**). In this particular game students are given a limited amount of time to ask as many things from their partner as possible. If asked correctly students MUST give the article. When the time is up the student with the most items on his/her desk wins.

*** Towards the end of the game a student can be heard at the back of the class arguing '*Das ist unfair*' (That's not fair).

3. The instructions for the assignment are explained.

4. Pairwork is set up so that individual pairs can organise their magazine. Again useful phrases (I'll do the interview, You do the horoscope, etc **OHT 10**) are shown on the projector so that students have a prop. Students are given just a few minutes in which to complete and hand in their written plan.

*** **5.** A spontaneous discussion occurs, which is very difficult to hear! The group of students at the back are asking if they can have longer than a week to do this assignment. They say they have a lot of homework at the moment for History and English. The teacher suggests that this means they feel German is less important. They disagree but say that the last assignment was too rushed. It is agreed that this will be discussed in the next lesson, when indeed a compromise was reached through whole class discussion. The German used is not always accurate, but they speak with conviction and their message is perfectly clear.

Part four: The same but different

The classes

The two classes seen during this section are the year 9 French group and the year 8 German group described in parts one and two respectively.

1. A list of illnesses is practised chorally with actions, then in a two-group round, then, by agreement with the class, in a four-group round (**OHT 11**).

2. Items of food and drink are passed around the classroom. Students always pass in the same direction and say what the item is as they pass it to their neighbour. Once all items are in circulation the teacher tells the class whether to pass slowly or quickly and whether to speak loudly or quietly.

*** Steven, on the front row on the teacher's left, drops something on the floor and the class calls out '*Vorsicht!*' (Be careful!). Exactly the same thing happens later in the activity and this time Steven says '*Entschuldigung!*' (Sorry!).

3. The beach ball is a real asset to language teachers! Here it is used firstly to practise simple personal information (the teacher asks a question as she throws the ball, students answer it as they return the ball) and then a word association game is played for simple vocabulary revision. The teacher says a word and students must say another word linked to the same topic. Students get under the table every time Rebecca gets the ball as she has a reputation for hitting people on the head every time she throws it!

*** By accident the teacher hits James on the head with the ball. She apologises and James replies '*Macht nichts*' (Doesn't matter).

4. A dialogue is introduced for buying ice-creams (**OHT 12**). The phrase 'A large ice cream or a small one?' is practised here. The teacher demonstrates the pair work with one student before handing over to the class. Partners simply repeat the phrase one after the other over and over again, but the gestures get slightly more exaggerated each time.

Later the whole dialogue is practised several times using a transparency with illustrations for several adverbs which dictate the manner in which the dialogue is repeated (**OHT 13**). The class agrees here that they will do it as if the salesperson is rude.

5. Here students revise phrases covered in previous lessons to do with helping at home before the topic is extended (**OHT 14**). Linking these quite complicated phrases to a well-known tune has helped them to remember them.

Some concluding thoughts ...

'From little acorns ...'

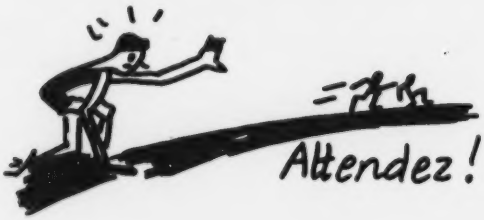
It should be remembered that the students seen in the video are at the end of an academic year during which I had made it my priority to use the target language at all times and to encourage students to use it with me and with each other. It was - and indeed still is - a long road and at times a frustrating one. There were several failures along the way when I had to rethink my approach, and especially when I was tired the temptation to speak English was great. However, the results were well worth the effort and in many ways I hope that the faces of the students will speak for themselves. Sometimes I think we underestimate the natural urge to communicate, and once given the chance and the tools there is no limit to what students can achieve. It doesn't happen often, but nothing can replace the feeling of satisfaction when a student accosts me in the local shopping centre and passes the time of day in the target language! If there was one piece of advice I had to give to teachers setting out on this road it would be quite simply to have faith. It does work in the end, and it is great fun!

Asseyez-vous!
Assieds-toi! (1)

Levez-vous!
Lève-toi!

à toi!

à moi!



Attendez!

Alors, ...

J'ai gagné

Nous avons gagné

Oui, c'est vrai.

Non,
c'est faux

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plus fort

plus vite

C'est quoi en français ...?

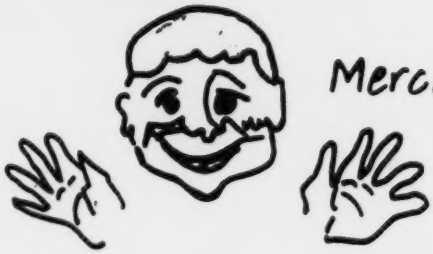
doucement

moins vite

C'est quoi en anglais ...?

Vas-y!

Stop!



Merci.

S'il vous plait

Je ne sais pas.

J'ai oublié

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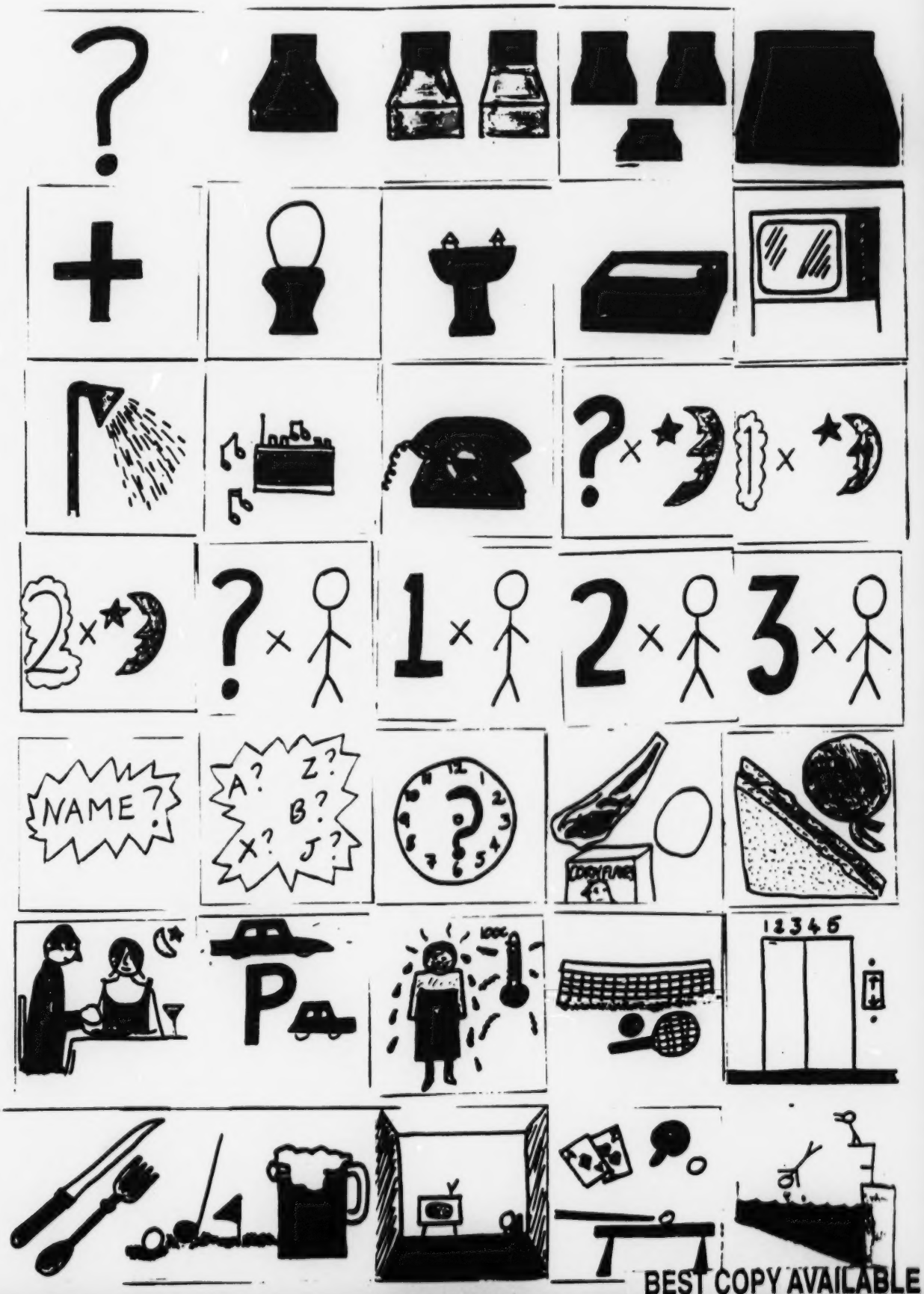

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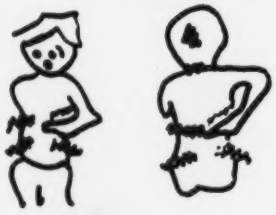
Je suis malade!

Je suis ...

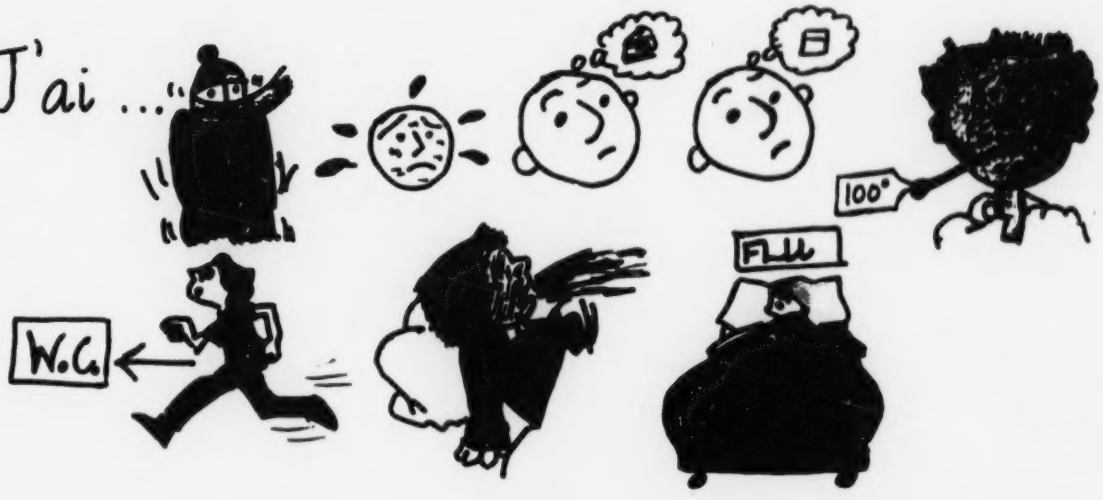
J'ai mal à la...

J'ai mal au...



J'ai mal aux...

J'ai ...



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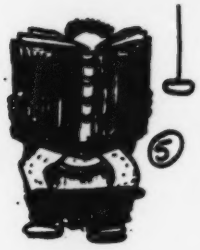
Entschuldigung, daß ich spät komme.

... hatte Verspätung.

Ich habe { meinen Wecker nicht gehört.
das Klingeln

Ich habe eine Panne gehabt.



Ich war auf der Toilette.

Ich war mit der Krankenschwester

Ich habe den Bus verpaßt.

Ich war in der Kantine.

Wie schreibt man ... ?

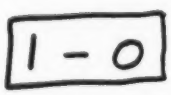
Ich weiß es!

Wo ist das 'A' ?
Ich hab's! } ?

Nein, das ist falsch!

Ja, das ist richtig! DEUTSCH ✓

Steh auf! - du hast Englisch gesprochen

Wir haben gewonnen! 

Wie war es?

Es war ganz toll ✓✓✓
sehr gut ✓✓
gut ✓
nicht schlecht ~
furchtbar ×

Warum?

Es war zu schnell
langweilig zzzzzzz
interessant oo Mmm!

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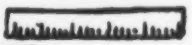
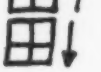
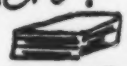
Im Klassenzimmer

Kannst du mir bitte
- einen Kuli geben?
- einen Stift
- einen Filzstift
- einen Radiergummi
- einen Spitzer
- einen Zirkel
- den Tesafilm
- den Klebstoff
- einen Klammeraffen
- eine Büroklammer
- eine Schere
- ein Lineal 
- ein Blatt

Darf ich bitte
- das Fenster aufmachen?
- das Fenster zumachen? 
- die Tür aufmachen?
- die Tür zumachen?
- zur Toilette gehen?
- zur Krankenschwester gehen?
- ein Wörterbuch holen? 
- ins Sprachlabor gehen?
- ins Zimmer 15 gehen?
- in die Bibliothek gehen?

GRUPPENARBEIT.

Also, ich
- schreibe ...
- mache ... { die Titelseite / ein Porträt / ein Interview mit ...
- arbeite { hier / im Zimmer 15 / alleine / mit Mary
- denke über ...
- zeichne

... und du kannst ... schreiben.
machen.
arbeiten.
denken.
zeichnen.

Aïe! Ça fait mal!

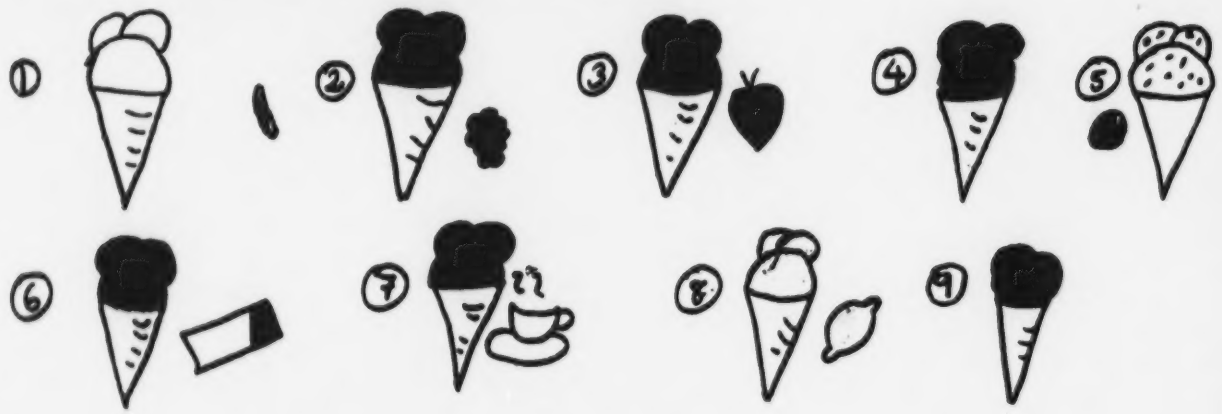
J'ai mal à la

J'ai mal au

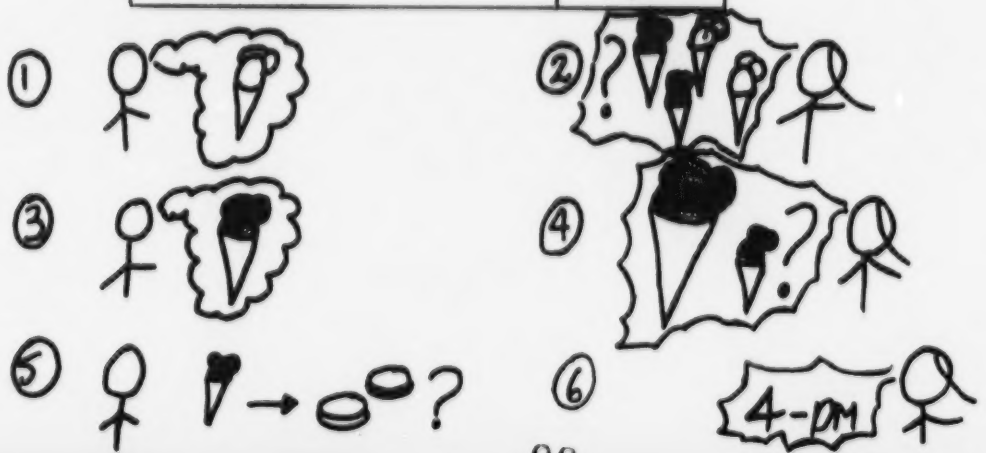
J'ai mal aux

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ich möchte ein Eis, bitte.



~Preistafel~	
Erdbeer	2,90
Himbeer	2,80
Vanille	2,60
Nuß	3,10
Schokolade	3,20
Zitrone	3,40
Pfefferminz	2,70
Mokka	3,30



1
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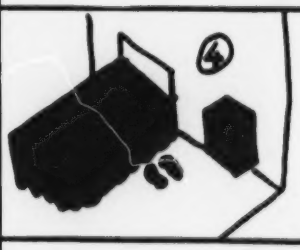
Wie hilfst du zu Hause?

Ich ab.

Ich  auf.

Ich

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